

River rafting essay sample

[Law](#), [Security](#)



The modern raft is an inflatable boat, consisting of very durable, multi-layered rubberized (hypalon) or vinyl fabrics (PVC) with several independent air chambers. The length varies between 3.5 m (11 ft) and 6 m (20 ft), the width between 1.8 m (6 ft) and 2.5 m (8 ft). The exception to this size rule is usually the packraft, which is designed as a portable single-person raft and may be as small as 1.5 metres (4.9 ft) long and weigh as little as 4 pounds (1.8 kg). Rafts come in a few different forms. In Europe and Australasia, the most common is the symmetrical raft steered with a paddle at the stern. Other types are the asymmetrical, rudder-controlled raft and the symmetrical raft with central helm (oars) or Stern Mounts with the oar frame located at the rear of the raft. Rafts are usually propelled with ordinary paddles and or oars and typically hold 4 to 12 persons. In Russia, rafts are often hand made and are often a catamaran style with two inflatable tubes attached to a frame. Pairs of paddlers navigate on these rafts. Catamaran style rafts have become popular in the western United States as well, but are typically rowed instead of paddled.

Grades of white water

Below are the six grades of difficulty in white water rafting. They range from simple to very dangerous and potential death or serious injuries. Grade 1: Very small rough areas, might require slight maneuvering. (Skill level: very basic) Grade 2: Some rough water, maybe some rocks, might require some maneuvering. (Skill level: basic paddling skill) Grade 3: Whitewater, small waves, maybe a small drop, but no considerable danger. May require significant maneuvering. (Skill level: experienced paddling skills) Grade 4: Whitewater, medium waves, maybe rocks, maybe a considerable drop, sharp

maneuvers may be needed. (Skill level: whitewater experience) Grade 5: Whitewater, large waves, large volume, possibility of large rocks and hazards, possibility of a large drop, requires precise maneuvering. (Skill level: advanced whitewater experience)

Grade 6: Class 6 rapids are considered to be so dangerous that they are effectively unnavigable on a reliably safe basis. Rafters can expect to encounter substantial whitewater, huge waves, huge rocks and hazards, and/or substantial drops that will impart severe impacts beyond the structural capacities and impact ratings of almost all rafting equipment. Traversing a Class 6 rapid has a dramatically increased likelihood of ending in serious injury or death compared to lesser classes. (Skill level: successful completion of a Class 6 rapid without serious injury or death is widely considered to be a matter of great luck or extreme skill and is considered by some as a suicidal venture)

Safety

White water rafting can be a dangerous sport, especially if basic safety precautions are not observed. Both commercial and private trips have seen their share of injuries and fatalities, though private travel has typically been associated with greater risk. Depending on the area, safety regulations covering raft operators may exist in legislation. These range from certification of outfitters, rafts, and raft leaders, to more stringent regulations about equipment and procedures. It is generally advisable to discuss safety measures with a rafting operator before signing on for a trip. The equipment used and the qualifications of the company and raft guides

are essential information to be considered. Like most outdoor sports, rafting in general has become safer over the years. Expertise in the sport has increased, and equipment has become more specialized and increased in quality. As a result the difficulty rating of most river runs has changed. A classic example would be the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon or Jalcomulco River in Mexico, which has swallowed whole expeditions in the past, leaving only fragments of boats.

In contrast, it is now run safely by commercial outfitters hundreds of times each year with relatively untrained passengers.[1] Risks in white water rafting stem from both environmental dangers and from improper behavior. Certain features on rivers are inherently unsafe and have remained consistently so despite the passage of time. These would include “keeper hydraulics”, “strainers” (e. g. fallen trees), dams (especially low-head dams, which tend to produce river-wide keeper hydraulics), undercut rocks, and of course dangerously high waterfalls. Rafting with experienced guides is the safest way to avoid such features. Even in safe areas, however, moving water can always present risks—such as when a swimmer attempts to stand up on a rocky riverbed in strong current, risking foot entrapment. Irresponsible behavior related to rafting while intoxicated has also contributed to many accidents.

One of the most simple ways to avoid injury while out of a raft, is to swim to an eddy to avoid being taken downstream. To combat the illusion that rafting is akin to an amusement park ride, and to underscore the personal responsibility each rafter faces on a trip, rafting outfitters generally require

customers to sign waiver forms indicating understanding and acceptance of potential serious risks. Rafting trips often begin with safety presentations to educate customers about problems that may arise. White water rafting is often played for the adrenaline rush and this can become a problem for participants' safety. White water rafting accidents have occurred but are not common. Due to this the overall risk level on a rafting trip with experienced guides using proper precautions is low. Thousands of people safely enjoy raft trips every year.